TRICARE North

January 2005

TRICARE Regional Office North (TRO-N) Update

Regional Director's Perspective - The Way Ahead

Ms. Nancy Adams, SES

The TRO-N Office, and our partners, Health Net Federal Services (HNFS), have been hard at work for the past six months transitioning to our new regional contract. In between contract start-up and the inevitable challenges associated with it, we've managed to provide care for over 1.4 million PRIME enrollees, make significant headway in the referral and authorizations processes and correct our provider directories. Needless to say, our ability to provide our beneficiaries with the quality healthcare they so richly deserve couldn't have been done as effectively or efficiently without the hard work of our region's MTFs. As we move out of transition, now is the time to look to "The Way Ahead," and determine how we can continue to improve the quality of healthcare and our beneficiaries' experience with our healthcare system.

My office has already started our journey through the development of our region's mission and vision statements. In addition, you can also expect to see the following from the TRO-N Office in the coming months:

* A strategic plan with goals, objectives and important metrics.
* Toolkits for business planning and venture capital requirements.
* The start-up of our extranet.
* Additional operating reports for our MTFs
* A regional newsletter.

We're excited about the work that's already been done and believe there is a very promising future for the North region. Working together, we know that our office, our region's MTFs, and HNFS can continue to improve customer service for our region's beneficiaries, keeping our vision alive.

Mission

Through business planning and health plan management, facilitate the integration of the direct care system and purchased healthcare delivery systems to improve customer satisfaction.

Vision

World class healthcare for all TRICARE North beneficiaries.

The Here and Now – Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for Option Period (OP) 2

CAPT Barry Cohen, USN

Option Period (OP) 1 is quickly coming to an end and it is time to update MTF MOUs in preparation for OP 2. MOUs must be finalized and signed by 1 Mar 05 to meet the goal of full execution 30 days prior to the start of each option period, which will be 1 Apr 05. Starting in February, TRO-N Directors will be visiting each MTF throughout the Region to discuss MOU updates and processes in an effort to ensure all MOUs are completed by 1 Mar 05. MOU templates are in the final stages of development and will be forwarded to MTF Commander's as soon as they are available. If MTFs have specific questions, they should contact their designated TRO-N Point of Contact.

Business Operations Update

CAPT Elizabeth Nelson, USN

FY06 Business Plans are due soon! A Business Planning tool will be unveiled at the TRICARE conference. The tool is web-based and is located at: TriServiceBPS.afmoa.af.mil. Anticipate plan submissions in July.

The Venture Capital Initiative process will be released on 1 Feb 05. Each region will receive $5M. A web-based tool using the Business Planning portal has been developed. Submissions are due 15 March 05.

News You Can Use

Prime Travel Benefits

The Prime travel entitlement applies in the following situations: If you are a non-Active Duty TRICARE Prime enrollee AND your Primary Care Manager (PCM) decides you need non-emergent, medically necessary, specialty care AND you have to travel more than 100 miles from your PCM's location/office to get that specialty care, you can be paid for those "reasonable travel expenses" that you pay for out of pocket when you travel to the specialist. For more information please contact the MTF Patient Travel Representative or the Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator if you are assigned to a PCM at an MTF. If you are assigned to a civilian network PCM outside the MTF, you need to contact the Patient Travel Representative or Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator at the TRICARE Regional Office in the TRICARE region where you are enrolled. For more information contact Mr. Jim Brado at (703) 681-2889 x6721.

Newborn Enrollment Information

Newborns or adoptees are automatically covered under TRICARE Prime/Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members (TPRADFM) for up to 60 days after the date of birth and/or adoption as long as one other person in the family is enrolled in Prime/Prime Remote/TPRADFM.

Within this 60 day window, the beneficiary should:

* Register the newborn or newly adopted child in DEERS, through the unit personnel office or the nearest Uniformed Services ID card facility.
* Enroll him or her in TRICARE Prime or TPRADFM if the beneficiary wishes to continue the PRIME benefit with its enhanced preventive services and reduced costs.

On day 61, PRIME and TPRADFM benefits end and future claims will process as TRICARE Standard. Or, the beneficiary may enroll the child as a new PRIME enrollee subject to the 20th of the month rule.

TRICARE Contractors have not received the contract modification nor have system logic changes been made. Therefore, beneficiaries will not be held to the Policy modifications until all criteria are met.

Access to Care Standard – Drive Time

Enrollee travel time may not exceed 30 minutes from home to a primary care delivery site. There are two exceptions: (1) when an absence of providers (not just network providers) makes this access standard impossible to meet and (2) when a beneficiary voluntarily waives this drive time standard in order to choose a primary care manager (PCM) in an MTF.

For more information on either of these issues

Special Staff Vignettes

Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEL)

MSG Wendy C. Tureaud has arrived at the office to function as the Senior Enlisted Advisor. Among her many duties, MSG Tureaud will present the enlisted perspective on behalf of over 2.1 million beneficiaries within the 23 states. MSG Tureaud will also:

* Establish and maintain open and effective communication with the leadership of all MTFs, focusing on NCO support channels.
* Provide TRICARE education to military-related and community forums.

VA/DoD Liaison

John B. McDonald has arrived at the office to function as the VA Regional Liaison. Among his many duties, Mr. McDonald will play a major role in increasing VA participation in TRICARE Networks encompassing all or portions of 23 states. John can also help provide service in the following areas:

* Provide expertise pertaining to DoD-VA relationships.
* Work with appropriate individuals to develop and implement VA-DoD Sharing agreements.
* Plan for increased coordination of federal healthcare systems.

Special Needs/Case Management Nurse Consultant

Sandi M. Johnson has arrived at the office to function as a nurse consultant. She will play a major role in advocating on behalf and securing services for our special needs beneficiaries in the 23 state region. She will also play a vital role in the region’s case management program.

Reserve Component BCAC

Chief Charlene Newsome is an Army National Guard Personnel Warrant Officer detailed to the TRO-N as a RC BCAC. She serves as the POC for RC Family Readiness Coordinators requesting TRICARE briefings for unit mobilizations, demobilizations, and briefings. Also, she is a liaison on RC issues affecting access to care, eligibility, claims and benefits.